
ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM

THE ANARCHIST LABOR MOVEMENT

THE FREE COMMUNE/COMMUNITY

“The emancipation of the working class must be the task of the workers themselves.”

Anarcho-Syndicalists do more than workplace organizing. We believe in creating counter-institutions which preconfigure the society we would like to live in; in advance of a Social Revolution which would completely transform our communities. We call this **“building the New Society within the shell of the old.”** In this way we educate ourselves and demonstrate to others that our ideas are practical. Our model community was inspired by the Paris Commune (1871) and Spanish Civil War (1936). Many of our collectives [affinity groups] are involved with projects that reflect aspects of the following:

Community Self-Management

The Free Community is managed by the residents themselves, without a professional bureaucracy. Social decisions [those affecting the whole community] are made socially by the residents [general assembly] or their recallable delegates [community council] who represent their desires. Some public services are managed by the workers themselves, who work with the community to meet its needs.

For workplaces to be represented, their workers should live in the community. Workers have the right to take-over enterprises abandoned by their owner(s). Ultimately, large enterprises will be self-managed by the workplace workers associations [shop floor grassroots]. Smaller enterprises may be reorganized as technical workshops with apprentices, professional offices with internships, or self-employed persons. Workers work best who work for themselves.

Labor exchanges will help workers find full-time employment at the community and regional levels, get job skill training, and relocate to the community where their new job is.

Purchasing and distribution co-ops will be organized to facilitate distributors and consumers finding respective producers in other communities, and vice versa on a regional and multi-regional scale. Communities cooperate through recallable community delegates sent to regional and multi-regional coordinating councils.

The commune was historically a security arrangement against overtaxing kings [like machine politicians], robber barons [capitalist corporations] and thieves [gangsters]. Security was provided by workers militia who lived in the community. Security is democratized instead of the occupying armies of the State: the police and military [who live outside the community and treat it like a rich man's colony]. They [militia] are accountable to the community. Courts are replaced by randomly selected tribunals [like a jury] and arbitration.

Finance

Community credit unions lend money in the community where their depositors live. The beneficiaries are residents and workers who work in the communities where they live. We want to eliminate the demand for [dependence upon] loan sharks, check-cashing/payday-advance, and pawn brokers by eliminating poverty.

Workplaces control their own assets through worker self-management. They calculate operating costs, decide work compensation, and finance socialized public services [e.g., public cafeterias, clinics, schools, libraries, parks, community gardens, housing, utilities, communications, transit, etc.]. Workers and their widows are entitled to a pensioned retirement. Workers should manage their own pension funds.

Ultimately, credit and finance are socialized at the community level. In order to abolish social classes, all debts are forgiven [including bonds, credit cards], all stocks are invalidated, and deeds are confiscated by the community which will collectively make land use decisions. Wealth [like bullion] is consolidated [and

democratized] in community credit unions [regional banks will redistribute their wealth locally] . Inheritance of real estate is abolished: people are entitled to all they can accumulate in a single lifetime. Stock exchanges and brokerages will be closed with their workers retrained. Control and decentralization of finance will inhibit political reaction [counter-revolution] by capitalists and their allies, by denying them resources.

Some non-capitalist economic activity may not be socialized [e.g., barter, black market].

Housing

Housing will be socialized by the abolition of rents. Rental housing will be maintained by renters committees who will coordinate their needs [safety, sanitation, maintenance] through a community renters association. Slum housing and illegal units like garage conversions will be made habitable. Rich people's housing will be subdivided into apartments or torn down so apartments can be constructed. Communities will build enough housing each year to eliminate/avoid overcrowding. New housing should not be built on land with natural or toxic hazards.

It will be more economical to build apartments than single family housing [suburban sprawl be impractical]. Some communities may build townhouses, co-housing, elderly, or other variations. Some single family neighborhoods will survive. People who work in the community will have a priority for living in new housing.

Infrastructure

The community will be developed to facilitate walking. Worker-managed public transit will connect neighborhoods to workplaces and public services [Some workplaces may operate transit services for their workers alone]. Worker-managed regional transit systems will be maintained by several communities.

Public utilities [water, power/street lights, sewers/wastewater, sanitation/trash collection] will be self-managed and supported by one or more communities, depending on their configuration. Likewise for streets, street cleaning, drainage/flood control, etc.. Infrastructure will be operated to be ecologically-friendly.

Communities will maintain their own motor pools and workshops to support public transit, infrastructure and maintenance.

Free Schools

Free public education is the foundation of a free and egalitarian society. This includes free teaching materials, books, school meals, health, tutoring, and school clothing. Schools should teach basic skills [reading, writing, math], help students discover their talents, and teach skills by practical applications [incl. research]. They should enable students to pursue their interests. Students should be able to walk to public schools and libraries in their own neighborhoods. Education should begin with preschool at age 4.

Communities should maintain community colleges with trade schools and apprenticeships, in cooperation with other communities. Universities will be self-managed by their workers.

Maintain strict separation of church and state; particularly in public education.

Health

Nutrition is the foundation of personal health in an egalitarian society. For this reason communities will establish public cafeterias where workers and students can receive free healthy sit-down meals. Community gardens should be established to allow residents to grow their own food organically.

Free clinics should provide basic health education, first aid and outpatient medical care [incl. maternity and family planning]. They should also provide dental and optical care.

Communities should cooperate to maintain public hospitals with trauma care. This should include care for disabled, handicapped and elderly persons.

We also need confidential free medical care for substance abuse, addiction, and mental health problems. This should include conflict resolution and peer counseling. Outpatient care will replace imprisonment.

Public parks will be built/maintained to encourage healthy recreation and social activities; and clean the air.